

DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



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June 16, 2006

John O'Donnell, President  
Board of Directors  
AWARE Inc.  
118 E 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Anaconda, MT 59047

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Following is the Quality Assurance Final Report of AWARE Inc.'s Intensive Family Education and Support Services. It is a pleasure working with such a conscientious and professional staff as is present with the IFES services. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions concerning this report. I am available to assist any way as to further facilitate the delivery of quality and compassionate services. I was assisted in this review by Judi Allen, the QIS for Kalispell and Paula Tripp, a QIS in Missoula.

Sincerely,

*Brad Johnson*

Brad Johnson, M.S.  
Quality Improvement Specialist

cc: Larry Noonan, Executive Director, AWARE Inc.  
Jeff Sturm, Administrator, DDP  
Tim Plaska, Community Services Bureau Chief, DDP  
Larry Lovelace, Region IV Manager, DDP  
Ted Spas, Region V Manager, DDP  
John Zeeck, Quality Assurance, DDP  
Perry Jones, Medicaid Waiver, DDP  
Erica Swanson, Child and Family Specialist, DDP

Annual Summary Report  
Comprehensive Evaluation  
AWARE Inc. – Intensive Family Education and Support  
6/1/06

**GENERAL AREAS**

**A. Administrative**

**1. Significant Events from the Agency**

AWARE Inc. became a qualified provider of DD IFES services on 4/25/02 for Regions IV and V (Western and South Central Montana). They are now serving families and children in eight different communities. Respite homes are now available in Kalispell and Livingston providing respite opportunities for families and a safe environment for children.

**2. Policies and Administrative Directives**

A thorough review of the new AWARE Inc. policy manual for IFES was conducted. All policies required by the review were in place.

**3. Accreditation**

AWARE Inc. received CARF accreditation in 2006.

**4. Fiscal Audits**

For the most current Desk Review of Audit Report dated 5/17/06, the audit report was found acceptable, the opinions on the financial statements and compliance for major programs were unqualified and there were no findings or questioned costs in the report.

**5. Appendix I**

There are no specific requirements listed in Appendix I of the DDP Contract for FY '06.

**6. Maintenance of Records**

All three surveyors found good and sufficient records relating to the delivery of IFES services.

**SPECIFIC SERVICES OF THE PROVIDER**

**A. Children's Waiver Services**

AWARE Inc. is currently certified by the Developmental Disabilities Program to provide Intensive Family Education and Support services. Two home visits and file reviews were conducted by Judi Allen, QIS, in the Kalispell area, one home visit and file review was conducted in the Missoula area by Paula Tripp, QIS and two home visits and file reviews were conducted in Bozeman by Brad Johnson, QIS. These home visits were conducted in between November '05 and March '06.

**Eligibility**

Eligibility is a mixed picture here as some kids have ported their services and initial DD eligibility was done elsewhere. All five surveyed were clearly eligible for intensive services with sufficient assessments and documentation. Eligibility review panels (ERPS) are conducted when needed. Assessments are updated as needed.

**1. Family Centered Services**

All families indicated that they felt they were in the driver's seat regarding the services provided to their child. There were indications from the families that the plans were flexible and that it was easy to have objectives modified.

**2. IFSP**

Per the checklist, all components of the IFSP were present for all five files reviewed. Copies of written notices of IFSP meetings were not found in all the file reviews.

**3. Provision of Resources and Support**

Families indicated that they received the services agreed upon in the IFSP and that they were provided within the timelines specified. Turnover of staff was unsettling for some families but this is not a situation unique to this service provider. Respite time sheets were completed correctly and there were receipts for purchases. There was ample documentation of family contacts with the FSS.

**4. Timelines**

All timelines relating to IFES, (IFSPs and cost plans) were met for the five individuals surveyed.

**5. Transition Planning**

For those surveyed that it was appropriate, transitioning was discussed, addressed and documented in the IFSP.

**6. Procedural Safeguards**

Families felt that the personal information contained in the records were secure, they felt comfortable that they could access them at any time and information would not be given out without their permission. There was ample evidence of signed releases of information. Families are provided with a copy of the internal complaint procedure for appealing agency decisions upon intake. Families were advised upon intake that their services were portable but did not remember being reminded of that at the annual IFSP meetings.

**7. Other Contract Requirements**

There are four comprehensively certified Family Support Specialists and three are currently operating under provisional certification and working towards certification.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

All five families that were surveyed expressed significant satisfaction with the services received from AWARE Inc. through the IFES program. FSS was "good at clarification" of information. "Gets lots of choices" of ancillary providers. They "really try hard with service delivery. Comfortable to be honest." "FSS is the best case manager ever!" "Too many forms!" All three surveyors were very pleased with the responses of parents and the apparent quality of services being delivered. It was especially impressive as to how well the policy manual and the documentation at the FSS level were in compliance.

### **Findings:**

- 1) Kalispell – two written notices of IFSP meetings were not found
- 2) Kalispell - Annual renewal of the DDP Form 5 (Choice) was not found.
- 3) Kalispell – Copies of IFSPs not sent to QIS.

**Response to Findings (4/27/06):**

- 1) One written notice had not been found by the reviewer but was in the file and one was not done due to the timeliness of the meeting and the transitioning of a new FSS to the case. **(Accepted)**
- 2) A review of the dates indicated that the DDP 5 Form was not due until after the quality assurance review had been done. **(Accepted)**
- 3) Annual IFSPs are due July of '06 and copies will be sent to the respective QIS and annually thereafter. **(Accepted)**

**Suggestions – Best Practices (not binding)**

- 1) Date and sign everything! There were some documents for which it was hard to determine when they were created and by whom.

*Brad Johnson, 6/16/06*

Brad Johnson, M.S.  
Lead Surveyor, Quality Improvement Specialist  
Developmental Disabilities Program